

Library Board of Rhode Island Annual Report 2016

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

Members and Representations

Thomas Viall (Chair, General Library Users); Cristina M. Amedeo (General Library Users); John N. Bucci (Medium or Large Public Libraries); Melody Drnach, (General Library Users); Annette Feldman (Small Public Libraries); Kenneth Findlay (Library Serving Institutionalized Persons); Edward Garcia (Economically Disadvantaged); Louise Herrington-Bright (General Library Users); Rosita E. Hopper (Academic Libraries); Phyllis A. Humphrey (School Libraries); Alison Davis Maxell (Corporate or Special Libraries); Monica Nazareth-Dzialo (Users of Talking Books Plus); Doug Norris (Statewide Library Advocacy Group); Rose Ellen Reynolds (General Library Users); Robert H. Sloan, Jr. (Public Library Trustees); Joan Ress Reeves (Member Emeritus); Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education (Ex Officio); Commissioner of Higher Education (Ex Officio).

Board Meetings

The Board convened 10 meetings in state fiscal year 2016, with minutes attached as an appendix to this report:

- September 21, 2015
- October 26, 2015
- November 16, 2015
- December 21, 2015
- January 11, 2016
- February 22, 2016
- March 21, 2016
- April 11, 2016
- May 16, 2016
- June 13, 2016

Board Actions

The Board provides guidance to the Office of Library and Information Services, setting policy for the development of public library services, interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing as relates to current and future library and information service needs in the state. The Board, upon seeking the advice of the stakeholders they represent and the Chief of Library Services, also determines priorities for the expenditure of state and federal funds in the development of public library services, interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing.

In state fiscal year 2016, the Board and its committees took action on the following matters:

- Reviewed and revised the Public Library Construction Reimbursement Regulations.
- Reviewed and revised the Library Board of Rhode Island By-Laws.
- Established membership of the Appeals Committee, the Policy Review Committee, and the Legislative Committee in accordance with the By-Laws.

- Considered the Providence League of Women Voters Study, Revisiting State Assistance to Rhode Island Libraries, a draft paper on the perceived shortcomings of the state aid to libraries formula, in which the state aid formula was criticized as being unfair to large urban libraries.
- Established a committee to examine the formula for distribution of state aid to public libraries.
- Monitored and discussed courses of action on state and federal legislation impacting libraries.
- Reported on issues of importance and/or concern for the constituents they represent throughout the year, especially interlibrary delivery services for school libraries, reduction of funding for statewide databases, and services to Rhode Islanders who are blind or visually impaired.
- Brought forth issues and observations from Board members' areas of expertise within the library community and at external organizations whose objectives intersect with libraries, such as literacy, technology and social services. These reports helped guide the Office of Library and Information Services in the development and/or clarification of procedures and provision of services and programs for the libraries in the state.

Financial Statement

- No funds were received or expended by the Board.
- Clerical, administrative and technical support for the Board were provided by the Office of Library and Information Services.

Board Performance

- Submitted letter of concern regarding elimination of separate standards for library service and diminishment of information literacy standards in the proposed revision of accreditation standards for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).
- Submitted a letter to the US Senate Committee on Rules and Administration in support of the nomination of Dr. Carla Hayden as the next Librarian of Congress.
- Approved revision of By-Laws for the Library Board of Rhode Island.
- Appointed members to the Appeals Committee, the Policy Review Committee, and the Legislative Committee; committee members reviewed and clarified charges to their respective committees.
- Approved revision of Public Library Construction Reimbursement Regulations.
- Monitored, discussed and testified as appropriate on state legislation impacting libraries.
- Attended National Library Legislative Day in Washington DC in May 2016 to advocate for federal legislation impacting libraries.
- Participated in a community meeting with Senator Jack Reed, lead sponsor of the Library Services and Technology Act, to highlight the activities of libraries in Rhode Island and the importance of federal funding in supporting those activities, especially in the areas of workforce development, literacy (textual, digital, financial, health), community engagement, and life-long learning.
- Provided critical feedback on activities of the Office of Library and Information Services, including interlibrary delivery, statewide resources available on AskRI, continuing education programming for librarians, and strategic planning of statewide library services.

Hearings and Complaints

- No hearings were conducted by the Board.
- No complaints were brought before the Board.

Board Trainings

- In September and October 2015 four new members appointed in June 2015 were provided with an orientation to the Board by the Chief of Library Services, including an overview of their responsibilities and opportunities for service, pursuant to RIGL 29-3.1.

Anticipated Activities 2017

- Develop maximum eligible costs for Public Library Construction Reimbursement Program and complete the regulatory process to promulgate regulations.
- Undertake a study of the grant-in-aid formula and develop recommendations for its possible alteration to create greater equity in the distribution of state aid for public library services.
- Develop an environmental assessment of current and future library and information needs to serve as the basis for the Office of Library and Information Services' comprehensive strategic plan.
- Adopt a new Five Year Strategic Plan (2018-2022) for the receipt of federal Library Services and Technology Act funds as required by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Findings and Recommendations

- The Board continues to seek ways in which to support and further the development of library services in Rhode Island's cities and towns, schools, colleges and universities, and other non-profit organizations. Additionally, the Board seeks to expand partnerships with similar organizations to support and strengthen library and information resources and programs in traditional and innovative ways for all Rhode Islanders.
- The Board currently has 11 members whose terms have expired: 4 expired in 2016, 7 previously. The Board consists of 15 members. All members with expired terms, with one exception, are continuing to serve until a successor is appointed, per RIGL 29.3.1-3.1. Alison Maxell, Representing Special Librarians, has resigned from the Board due to her relocation to Maine; her term expired in 2016.
- The commissioner for elementary and secondary education and the commissioner for higher education hold ex officio seats on the Library Board of Rhode Island, but no designee has been appointed; as such, education does not participate in Library Board meetings.

Appendix: Library Board of Rhode Island Minutes

Minutes of meetings held:

- September 21, 2015
- October 26, 2015
- November 16, 2015
- December 21, 2015
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